Guidelines for Program Planning, Approval, and Review

**Washington State
Higher Education Coordinating Board**

January 2001

BOB CRAVES
Chair

MARC GASPARD
Executive Director

STATE OF WASHINGTON

HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

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RESOLUTION NO. 01-02

WHEREAS, RCW 28B.80.340 assigns to the Higher Education Coordination Board the responsibility for approving new degree programs to be offered by the pubic four-year institutions; and

WHEREAS, RCW 28B.80.340 assigns to the Higher Education Coordinating Board the responsibility for reviewing, evaluating, and making recommendations for the modification, consolidation, initiation, or elimination of existing degree programs offered by the public four-year institutions; and

WHEREAS, The Higher Education Coordination Board's *Guidelines for Program Planning, Approval, and Review* were last revised in 1998; and

WHEREAS, The existing *Guidelines* include a commitment to review the process frequently in order to continuously improve efficiency, streamline efforts, and incorporate policy changes and initiatives adopted by the Board;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Higher Education Coordinating Board adopts the document, *Guidelines for Program Planning, Approval, and Review,* effective January 24, 2001.

Adopted:

January 24, 2001

Attest:

_____
Bob Craves, Chair

_____
Kristianne Blake, Secretary

GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAM PLANNING, APPROVAL, AND REVIEW

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GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAM PLANNING, APPROVAL, AND REVIEW

HECB STATUTORY AUTHORITY

New Program Approval

The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) has been charged by statute with the responsibility for approving new degree programs to be offered by the public four-year institutions. The HECB is responsible for the review and approval of both on- and off-campus programs – including branch campus offerings – in coordination and consultation with all other segments of higher education. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges performs a similar function for the community and technical college system, except in the case of programs of over 120 credit hours, which also require HECB review.

Existing Program Review

The HECB has also been charged in statute with the responsibility for reviewing existing degree programs at all public four-year institutions. Specifically, the HECB is to "review, evaluate, and make recommendations for the modification, consolidation, initiation, or elimination" of on-campus programs offered by the four-year institutions, and "review and evaluate and approve, modify, consolidate, initiate, or eliminate" off-campus programs. This charge is carried out through a program review process, conducted by the institutions and reviewed by the HECB, which is described in a later section.

Importance to HECB

Program approval and review contributes to the HECB's overall effectiveness in fulfilling its primary purpose of "planning, coordination, monitoring, and policy analysis for higher education in the state of Washington." The HECB has been specifically requested to "represent the broad public interest above the interests of the individual" institutions. Therefore, the HECB must ensure that new programs are needed, will serve the public interest, and are a sound investment of state resources. Furthermore, the HECB must ensure that existing programs are meeting the needs of students and improving in quality, and that such programs continue to be a sound investment of the state's resources.

These guidelines have been written to apply to all types and locations of programs. They will be reviewed on a regular basis and revised to incorporate policy changes adopted by the HECB.

PROGRAM PLAN

Submission of New Program Plans and Required Information

On a two-year cycle, beginning January 1, 2002, each four-year institution shall submit to the HECB a program plan for the next biennium. Complete information shall be included on:

- Renaming programs – basic information about what the institution intends to do.

- New or revised program options – basic information about what the institution intends to do.

- Certificate programs – basic information about what the institution intends to do.

- New degree programs planned to be offered in the next biennium shall include the following:
    - Degree title
    - Delivery mechanism
    - Location
    - Implementation date
    - Substantive statement of need
    - Source of funding
    - Year 1 and full enrollment targets (FTE and headcount)

- Program eliminations shall include the following:
    - Degree title
    - Date of elimination
    - Location
    - Enrollments (FTE and headcount for past five years)
    - Rationale for elimination
    - Provisions for enabling enrolled students to graduate
    - Disposition of the program's state resources

Definitions can be found in Appendix A.

Process

The institution shall submit one copy of its program plan in an agreed upon electronic format to the HECB and ten hard copies of their program plan to the HECB for redistribution. These plans will be shared with other public higher education institutions, independent institutions, and other educational sectors. Comments will be directed to the HECB and shared with the proposing institution.

No commitments shall be made to a community or a constituency that a program will be offered until the HECB has granted "permission to develop a proposal status" to the program, indicating that the institution may continue to develop the program.

Exceptions to this process may be granted by the HECB Executive Director in cases where the process reduces the institution's effectiveness in responding to a clear and urgent need.

Criteria

HECB review of new programs will focus on the state's need for the program, effective use of resources, and consistency with institutional mission and priorities. State need may refer to the economic, occupational, professional, workforce, cultural, or intellectual needs of the state's citizens. This also could include evidence of student interest and employer demand. Sufficient information to determine whether need is likely to exist must be submitted at the program planning stage for each program planned for the upcoming biennium. The program proposal shall contain a more complete documentation of need for the program. The nature and extent of program duplication also will be evaluated. Each proposed program must be consistent with the institution's mission and reflect the institution's program priorities.

HECB Decision Options

For planned new degree programs the HECB may make one of the following determinations:

- Grant "permission to develop proposal status" for the planned program, which indicates the institution can continue to develop a full proposal;

- Return the program to the institution for further development and re-submission in a subsequent program plan; or

- Disapprove the program; development of these programs shall cease.

After new degree programs receive "permission to develop proposal status" a program proposal will need to be prepared and submitted for review of the HECB, within three years of gaining such status. Should this not occur, the program sunsets.

PROGRAM APPROVAL

Process for New Degree Programs

An institution shall submit one copy of its proposal in an agreed upon electronic format to the HECB no less than three months prior to the anticipated start date of the program to allow sufficient time for staff review, consultation with the institution, and preparation of a report to the HECB. The public four-year institutions and HECB staff have 30 days to comment, after receipt of the program proposal, on the proposed new degree program. External review of the proposal will consist of two groups:

1. External Experts
   a. one reviewer who is a recognized expert in the field from outside Washington State; and,
   b. one additional reviewer who is an expert in the field.

2. All Public Four-Year Institutions

An institution may submit its draft proposal for external review at the same time that it conducts its internal review of the proposal.

Criteria

Staff will review the program proposal and prepare an executive summary for the HECB highlighting the following information on the proposed program.

1. Documentation of state need for the program.
2. Assessment plan, which includes plans for assessing student achievement and expected student learning outcomes, and program effectiveness.
3. Diversity plan, which addresses the program's plan for increasing the number of students from underrepresented populations.
4. Program budget.
5. Assurance that internal and external reviews attest to the quality of the program.
6. Use of technology.

A draft of the HECB executive summary will be shared with program and institutional representatives. If there is consensus, the program will be placed on the Board's consent agenda for approval. If there is controversy, the HECB will employ its dispute resolution process.

Proposal Cover Sheet, Information Requested, Forms

Information to be included in the program proposal is outlined in the pages that follow.

An incomplete proposal will be returned to the institution with specific areas of concern and inadequacies cited. Such action is not to be considered disapproval, and any proposal so returned may be re-submitted.

Cover Sheet for New Degree Program Proposals

Institution _____

Degree-Granting Unit (Department(s),
College, School, or Interdisciplinary Unit) _____

_____

Degree (Level) _____

of (Type) _____

in (Major) _____

CIP Code _____

Mode of Delivery (check all that apply): _____single campus/traditional classroom
_____ satellite _____ videotape _____ internet/web _____ other (describe)

Proposed Starting Date _____

Academic Department Representative _____

(Name) _____

(Title) _____

(Address) _____

(Telephone) _____ (Fax) _____

(E-mail) _____

Endorsement by
Chief Academic Officer _____

Date _____

Contents of New Degree Program Proposal

I. Program Need

A. <u>Relationship to Institutional Role and Mission</u>

B. <u>Documentation of Need for Program</u>
Please provide objective data, studies, or the results of institutional needs assessments conducted to document a special need. Use any of the following possible justifications, as appropriate to the program's nature:

1. Student interest or demand.

2. Cultural, artistic, and intellectual growth.

3. Economic growth and development.

4. Changes in occupation or profession.

5. Workforce needs of local industry. (Please detail whether workforce needs require new graduates or the retraining of present employees and estimate the demand for, and supply of, graduates.)

6. Service to community. (Please describe the potential opportunities for service to the community which program faculty, students, or administrative staff could provide. Include as appropriate, opportunities for research, internships, or service.)

7. Relationship to HECB policies and goals for higher education and/or Update to the Master Plan for Higher Education.

C. <u>Relationship to Other Institutions</u>

1. Duplication. (Please describe similar programs offered by a local public or independent institution.)

2. Uniqueness of program. (Please detail the unique aspects of the proposed program which differentiate it from similar programs described above.)

II. Program Description

A. <u>Goals, Objectives, Student Learning Outcomes</u>

B. <u>Curriculum</u>

1. Course of study

2. Admission requirements

3. Course sharing

C. <u>Use of Technology</u>
Please describe mode of course delivery, opportunities for student faculty interactions, and faculty development activities.

D. Faculty

Faculty profile. (See Table 1) – Please provide a profile of the anticipated faculty, (e.g., full-time, part-time, regular, continuing, adjunct) that will support the program, and the total FTE allocated to the program.)

E. Students

1. Projected enrollments for five years. (See Table 2)

2. Expected time for program completion.

3. Diversity. (Please detail the specific efforts planned to recruit and retain students who are persons of color or disabled.)

F. Administration

Administration and support staff. (See Table 3. Please provide the title and percents of effort devoted to the program.)

III. Program Assessment

A. Assessment plan

Please provide a detailed plan for assessing how well program objectives have been achieved. The plan shall include a description of how the assessment information will be gathered and how it will be used.

B. Student learning outcomes assessment plan

Please provide a detailed plan for assessing expected student learning outcomes. The plan shall include a description of how the student learning outcomes will be measured and how the results will be used.

IV. Finances

A. Summary of program costs

Please identify the amounts and sources of all program funding in Table 4 for: a) Year 1 of the program; and, b) the year it is expected to reach full enrollment, Year N. If the new program is to be funded from reallocated internal resources, describe the sources from which the funds are being reallocated.

V. External Evaluation of Proposal

A. External Expert Reviewers

Please provide the names and titles of the two external evaluators who reviewed the proposal. Enclose copies of the external evaluators' letters. Summarize the program developers' responses and subsequent modifications to the proposal based on evaluators' recommendations.

B. Other Public Four-Year Institutions

Please invite the other public four-year institutions to submit their comments related to the proposed program directly to the HECB.

TABLE 1

Program Faculty

Name	Rank	Status	% Effort in Program
Total FTE Faculty			

TABLE 2

Size of Program

Number of Students	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year N*
Headcount				
FTE				

* Please indicate the year in which the program plans to reach full enrollment.

TABLE 3

Administrative/Support Staff

Name	Title	Responsibilities	% Effort in Program
Administrative Staff			
Support Staff			
Total FTE Staff			

TABLE 4

Summary of Program Costs – Year 1 and Year N

Line Item	Internal Reallocation	New State Funds	Other Sources (a)	Year 1 Total	Year N (b) Total
Administrative Salaries (# FTE) Benefits @ # %					
Faculty Salaries (# FTE) Benefits @ # %					
TA/RA Salaries (# FTE) Benefits @ # %					
Clerical Salaries (# FTE) Benefits @ # %					
Other Salaries (c) (# FTE) Benefits @ # %					
Contract Services					
Goods & Services					
Travel					
Equipment (d)					
Other (e) (itemize)					
Indirect (if applied to program)					
TOTAL COST					
FTE Students					
Cost-per-FTE Student					

(a) Indicate the source of funds.

(b) Indicate academic year when the program is expected to reach full enrollment.

(c) Describe position or duties.

(d) Detail type and number of equipment needed.

(e) Describe what is included in this category.

Process for Existing Degree Programs

An institution shall submit a Notification of Intent for an existing program to be offered at a branch campus, a new off-campus location, via distance learning, or a combination of delivery methods at least 45 days prior to the proposed start date of the program. An institution shall submit the Notification of Intent in an agreed upon electronic format to the HECB. The Notification of Intent shall include the following information:

- Name of institution
- Degree title
- Delivery mechanism
- Location
- Implementation date
- Substantive statement of need
- Source of funding
- Year 1 and full enrollment targets (FTE and headcount)

The HECB staff will post the institution's Notification of Intent on its Web site within five business days of receipt, and notify the other public four-year institutions. The other public four-year institutions and HECB staff will have 30 days to review and comment on the Notification of Intent via an email link on the HECB Web site. If there is consensus, the HECB Executive Director will approve the existing degree program proposed to be offered at a branch campus, a new off-campus location, via distance learning technologies, or a combination of delivery methods. If there is controversy, the HECB will employ its dispute resolution process.

EXISTING PROGRAM REVIEW

Biennial Information

On a biennial basis, beginning January 1, 2002, each institution will submit an Enrollment Report to the HECB on all new programs it has initiated within the last five years and on all programs offered at the branch campuses. An institution shall submit an electronic copy of the Enrollment Report in an agreed upon electronic format to the HECB. After five years, all new programs, whether at branch or off-campus locations, new on the main campus, or delivered via distance learning technologies, shall be incorporated into the institution's on-going process of program review.

Review Process

On a biennial basis, beginning January 1, 2001, institutions shall submit Program Review Reports on programs reviewed in the previous biennium. In addition, institutions shall submit an inventory of programs scheduled for review in the upcoming biennium.

The institution is responsible for determining the appropriate process and criteria for program review. Similar programs offered by a single academic unit (e.g., department) may be reviewed at the same time and incorporated into one program review. However, when an existing program has spawned a new site or a new distance learning modality since its last institutional review, the new site or distance delivery mode will receive a separate focus within the single program review.

Each continuing program will be reviewed on a cycle (for example, every 5, 7, or 10 years) adopted by the institution. After the internal program review has been completed, a Program Review Summary Report will be submitted to the HECB. The Report will be reviewed by HECB staff. At its discretion, the HECB may request a copy of the complete program review document.

Based on the information provided in the Program Review Summary Report and/or additional information provided by the institution, staff will determine whether there is reason for the HECB to consider making a recommendation to modify, consolidate, or eliminate the program. On a biennial basis, staff will report to the HECB on program reviews conducted during the previous biennium.

Program Review Summary Report

For each degree program, the institution will submit a summary of results of its program review. The Program Review Summary Report shall contain the following information:

1. Degree program title.

2. Year of last program review.

3. Documentation of continuing need.

4. Assessment information related to expected student learning outcomes and the achievement of the program's objectives.

5. Plans to improve the quality and productivity of the program.

6. Data on number of majors and degrees granted in the last three academic years for each degree program incorporated in the review; number of FTE faculty and graduate assistants (Gas) that teach in the department. See Table 5 for format.

TABLE 5

Program Review Data

Name of Department	Year 1: 20__ – 20__	Year 2: 20__ – 20__	Year 3: 20__ – 20__

Degree Program A
    Majors
    Degrees Granted			

Degree Program B
    Majors
    Degrees Granted			

Degree Program C
    Majors
    Degrees Granted			

Departmental Data
    FTE Instructional Faculty
    FTE Gas			

APPENDIX A

DEFINITIONS

Certificate programs are programs of study that normally require less than one-quarter of the credits required for a degree program at a similar level. Successful completion of the program results in a certificate. Certificate programs may also be non-credit.

Degree means a title or rank awarded by a college or university to a student who has successfully completed a required course of study.

Degree program means a set of educational requirements, identified jointly by the department or other degree-granting unit and the college or university, which leads to a degree. Baccalaureate program requirements usually involve a combination of general education courses, courses in the major field of study, and elective courses. Graduate program requirements involve intensive study in the major field, preparation in the use and conduct of research, and/or a field or internship experience; professional programs generally prepare individuals for professional fields (e.g., law, medicine).

Degree title means a full designation of the degree including **level** (bachelor, master, doctor), **type** (e.g., arts, science, fine arts, business administration), and **major** (e.g., mathematics, civil engineering, history). These distinctions are illustrated below. Each institution may have a different taxonomy of degree titles. However, for the activities outlined in these guidelines, these definitions of a degree title will be used.

DEFINITION OF DEGREE TITLE

Degree Designation	Level	Type	Major
B.S. Chemistry	Bachelor	Science	Chemistry
B.F.A.	Bachelor	Fine Arts	Music
M. Engineering	Master	Engineering	Electrical Engineering
Med. Curriculum & Instr.	Master	Education	Curriculum & Instruction
M.B.A.	Master	Business Administration	Finance
Ph.D. Linguistics	Doctor	Philosophy	Linguistics

Major means that part of the curriculum where a student concentrates on one subject or group of subjects and which comprises the largest number of units in any given discipline. Its contents are usually defined by one academic department but also may be defined jointly by two or more departments, as in the case of an interdisciplinary major.

New degree means any proposed degree which differs from any other offered by the proposing department or unit in one or more of the three degree title specifications (level, type, or major). A program leading to a new degree (as defined above), even if constituted entirely of existing courses, requires review and approval of the HECB.

Off-campus degree program means a degree program offered away from the main or branch campus of the institution (in-state, out of state, or in another country) and may be in-person or telecommunicated instruction.

An **option, specialization, or concentration** within a degree program is an area of study that is generally less than one-half of the total credits needed for the upper-division major or graduate program. It may also be referred to as area of emphasis, track, or minor. It can generally be distinguished from a new degree in that full designation of the degree title – including level, type, and major – does not change when a new option is added.

APPENDIX B

BRANCH CAMPUS POLICIES

Role and Mission. The primary mission of the branch campuses is to provide instruction in degree-granting programs at the upper-division and master's levels. Placebound individuals in the area surrounding each branch campus will be the primary participants.

Degree Programs. All branch campuses may offer upper-division programs in the areas below. All branches will offer master's degrees in applied areas, as well as research-oriented master's programs (e.g., arts and sciences) where need has been demonstrated and quality assured.

BACHELOR'S LEVEL	MASTER'S LEVEL
Business	Business
Computer Science	Computer Science
Engineering	Engineering
Arts and Letters	Arts and Letters
Nursing	Education
Sciences	Health
Social Sciences	Social Sciences

The HECB will consider doctoral degrees on the branch campuses on a case-by-case basis in accordance with specific criteria applicable to practice-oriented and research-oriented doctorates.

Level of Coursework. Branch campuses are not four-year institutions. They are intended to serve students who have an Associate of Arts degree, or 90 quarter or 60 semester credits of appropriate college-level work.

Quality and Comparability. Branch campuses will offer educational programs of a quality comparable to those on the main campus.

Service to Students. Branches shall schedule their academic programs and provide support services to respond to the needs of their students.

APPENDIX C

OFF-CAMPUS POLICIES

1. Off-campus degree programs will be responsive to the educational needs of students and the economic needs of the state in both urban and rural areas. The demonstration of need for the program is essential to any program proposal.

2. Off-campus degree programs will be of high quality. The qualifications of faculty and staff, availability of library resources, and adequacy of facilities, funding, and support equipment will be comparable to main campus programs.

3. Off-campus degree programs must consist of a set of courses and related academic requirements for degree completion, the majority of which are available at the off campus location. Generally, the program must offer a schedule and array of courses that would allow one cohort of students to progress through the course of study and complete the program within three academic years or less. Degree programs intended to serve individual students must also make available sufficient coursework so that a student may progress through the degree program in three years or less.

4. Off-campus programs must represent an effective use of institutional and state resources which are sufficient to provide a quality program.

APPENDIX D

DISTANCE LEARNING POLICIES

New programs developed for distance delivery shall comply with institutional policies, including faculty development, appropriate media usage, student-faculty interaction, course sharing, academic requirements, and support services.

In 1997, the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) developed the "Principles of Good Practice in Electronically Offered Academic Degree and Certificate Programs," which are commended to institutions for their use in developing and delivering distance education programs.

WICHE Principles of Good Practice for Distance Learning Programs

Curriculum and Instruction

- Each program of study results in learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree or certificate awarded.

- An electronically offered degree or certificate program is coherent and complete.

- The program provides for appropriate real-time or delayed interaction between faculty and students and among students.

- Qualified faculty provide appropriate oversight of the program electronically offered.

Institutional Context and Commitment

Role and Mission

- The program is consistent with the institution's role and mission.

- Review and approval processes ensure the appropriateness of the technology being used to meet the program's objectives.

Faculty Support

- The program provides faculty support services specifically related to teaching via an electronic system.

- The program provides training for faculty who teach via the use of technology.

Resources for Learning

- The program ensures that appropriate learning resources are available to students.

Students and Student Services

- The program provides students with clear, complete, and timely information on the curriculum, course and degree requirements, nature of faculty/student interaction, assumptions about technological competence and skills, technical equipment requirements, availability of academic support services and financial aid resources, and costs and payment policies.

- Enrolled students have reasonable and adequate access to the range of student services appropriate to support their learning.

- Accepted students have the background, knowledge, and technical skills needed to undertake the program.

- Advertising, recruiting, and admissions materials clearly and accurately represent the program and the services available.

Commitment to Support

- Policies for faculty evaluation include appropriate consideration of teaching and scholarly activities related to electronically offered programs.

- The institution demonstrates a commitment to ongoing support, both financial and technical, and to continuation of the program for a period sufficient to enable students to complete a degree/certificate.

Evaluation and Assessment

- The institution evaluates the program's educational effectiveness, including assessments of student learning outcomes, student retention, and student and faculty satisfaction. Students have access to such program evaluation data.

- The institution provides for assessment and documentation of student achievement in each course and at completion of the program.

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENTS

Statements of student learning outcomes for the program should describe what graduates of the program will know and be able to do. The assessment plan should indicate how these outcomes will be assessed. The following generic sample student learning outcomes and assessments are provided to clarify what an assessment plan might include:

- Graduates of this program will be capable of writing a journal article of sufficient quality that it could be submitted for publication. (Assessment: Students will submit their articles to a juried journal for feedback.)

- Graduates will know how to apply software used in this field to solve everyday and cutting-edge problems. (Assessment: Students will use common software packages to solve problems submitted by practitioners in the field.)

- Graduates will demonstrate their knowledge of the discipline to the level of proficiency expected of an entry-level graduate student. (Assessment: GRE scores and an alumni survey will provide feedback about the adequacy of the preparation for a graduate program.)

- Graduates will demonstrate their knowledge of the tools, materials, and processes used in industry. (Assessment: Senior capstone projects will be presented to personnel from local businesses, and judged by a group of faculty and business representatives.)

- Graduates will be able to articulate verbally and in writing the key methods of inquiry used in this field. (Assessment: Students will take oral and written exams.)

- Graduates will demonstrate their knowledge of group dynamics and their ability to work successfully in teams. (Assessment: After successfully completing a written test that assesses their knowledge of group work, students will complete a team-based senior project and analyze the group process through self- and peer-evaluations.)

- Graduates will be able to evaluate arguments for and against a proposal. (Assessment: Students will develop criteria for evaluating a proposal, and use those criteria to recommend which proposals should go forward.)

- Graduates will demonstrate effective verbal communication skills in a presentation typically performed in a job related to this field. (Assessment: Students will make a presentation to practitioners in the field, and review the videotape of the presentation with faculty to critique their performance.)